The University Senate
FACULTY · STUDENT · P&A · CIVIL SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC)
March 20, 2025
Minutes of the Meeting

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes reflect the views of, nor are they binding on, the senate, the administration or the Board of Regents. The University Senate Office utilized notes taken during the meeting, video recording and transcript of the meeting, and AI to assist in summarizing substantive parts of the meeting transcript to compose these minutes. Minutes are reviewed by the committee before posting.

[**In these minutes:** Conversation with President Cunningham; TFAPS Report; Committee Business; Nominating Subcommittee]

PRESENT: Jennifer Goodnough (chair), Jean Abraham, Abraham Ayebo, Mark Bee, Rob Blair, Mark Borrello, David Brown, Liz Davis, Niloufar Hadidi, Sharon Jansa, Perry Leo (vice chair), Julie Olson, Sonali Pahwa, Ann Parr, Katherine Scheil, Rachna Shah, Shashi Shekhar, Cliff Steer, David Stenehjem, Subree Subramanian, Eric Van Wyk

ABSENT: None.

REGRETS: Timothy Johnson

OTHERS ATTENDING: President Rebecca Cunningham; Katherine Dowd, chair, Term Faculty and Academic Professionals Subcommittee (TFAPS)

1. Conversation with President Cunningham

Chair Jennifer Goodnough called the meeting to order and welcomed President Rebecca Cunningham. Cunningham addressed the current challenges the University faces related to federal oversight, funding uncertainties, and potential budget constraints. Below are the key points:

Federal Climate and Grant Disruptions

- The University is actively managing an influx of federal orders and investigations.
- 15-20 grants have received “stop work” orders for various reasons. The University is pushing back or adjusting components where possible.
- A recent court ruling may affect the University's ability to certify grants, particularly under new DEI-related injunctions. The legal implications are still being assessed.

Wider Impacts on the University

- Federal funding is expected to decline due to political conditions, agency cuts, and procedural delays.
- Cunningham emphasized that this is a University-wide issue, not just a problem for faculty with federal grants. All campuses and disciplines will be affected, including those that rely heavily on central funding. The University may need to reallocate resources to ensure the survival of some schools and units.

Scenario Planning and Budget Modeling

- Colleges are being asked to model budget scenarios based on reductions of 10%, 30%, or 50% in federal funding. These exercises help inform central decisions and possible support strategies across the University.
- While no hiring freeze or blanket austerity measures have been implemented yet, these remain possibilities depending on evolving conditions.

State Budget and Institutional Strategy

- The state budget is currently flat, which effectively acts as a cut due to inflation and unmet needs.
- As a result, all units are expected to plan for 7% reductions to address both prior budget gaps and future reinvestment goals (e.g., workforce, facilities).
- Central administration is not imposing top-down cuts but expects each dean to make localized decisions based on individual school needs and input.

Strategic Outlook

- A potential indirect cost rate cut (from 54% to 15%) could lead to a $101 million loss, significantly affecting both central and unit-level operations.
- Despite the uncertainty, Cunningham emphasized resilience, strategic planning, and collective problem-solving as the University navigates this political and financial environment.

Institutional Speech

President Cunningham addressed concerns about the Board of Regents' (BOR) resolution regarding institutional speech, which includes guidelines around when departments or centers may speak on behalf of the University and when individual faculty members are expressing personal academic views. She emphasized that the guidelines are not meant to censor individual faculty, but rather aim to distinguish between institutional speech (University-level or department-wide statements) and individual academic freedom. Faculty and centers retain the right to speak on public matters through scholarship and teaching. The goal is to allow a broader range of views and prevent the University from prematurely taking a stance that could limit academic debate.

Cunningham noted that the BOR determined that statements made by departments or centers as units are considered institutional speech—not collective individual faculty speech. As such, they must align with the University's position or abstain from comment if the University does not take a stance.

The provost will form an advisory committee to guide implementation of the BOR guidelines. Statements like "We, the faculty, believe X" posted on departmental websites

will be reviewed under this new framework.

Sonali Pahwa and Eric Van Wyk expressed concern that the BOR's decision disregarded the work of shared governance and the prior task force, which had proposed a different approach. Van Wyk expressed frustration that an article in *Brief* implied the BOR's decision was based on input from shared governance. Cunningham acknowledged that the BOR took input but did not adopt shared governance's recommendations. She agreed the language in the newsletter was imprecise and committed to ensuring more accurate communication in the future, as well as reaffirmed her commitment to academic freedom and to working with faculty.

2. TFAPS Report

Next, Goodnough introduced Katherine Dowd, chair of the Term Faculty and Academic Professionals Subcommittee (TFAPS), who presented recommendations regarding term/contract faculty and P&A instructors. The presentation included background, data, and recommendations following two years of subcommittee work.

Definitions and Roles

- Term (Contract) Faculty: Non-tenure-track instructors with the same job codes/titles as regular faculty; governed by faculty tenure code.
- P&A Instructors: Teaching specialists and lecturers in the education job family; governed by academic policies for P&A employees.
- Both groups may be full-time or part-time and hired on temporary or annually renewable contracts.

Contractual Differences

- Contract faculty can have multi-year contracts and promotion paths similar to tenured faculty, governed by individual college policies.
- P&A instructors follow a different promotion path and often lack clarity in evaluation and promotion standards. Their contract terms vary significantly and may exclude them from benefits such as sabbatical eligibility or merit increases.

Historical Context and Challenges

- Originally used to fill temporary gaps, the University has increasingly relied on these positions for core functions.
- These instructors often face unclear career paths, limited professional support, and marginal participation in departmental governance.
- A 2018-19 unionization effort prompted creation of a task force, followed by the launch of TFAPS in Fall 2022.

Data Highlights

- ~2,200 contract faculty; 68% full-time, 90% on the Twin Cities campus, 80% in health sciences.
- ~1,200 P&A instructors; 39% full-time, 82% on Twin Cities campus, 46% in CLA.

Key Issues

- Inconsistent use of job codes across colleges.
- Lack of standardized promotion paths and job specifications—P&A codes haven't been updated since 2001.
- Pay disparities, lack of merit-based raises, limited access to professional development, sabbatical leave, and emeritus status.

Recommendations

- Establish clear, consistent promotion paths and multi-year contract guidelines.
- Align severance and notice policies between contract and P&A instructors.
- Conduct a comprehensive job family study for P&A instructors.
- Extend professional development, sabbatical options, and phased retirement eligibility to full-time P&A instructors.

Feedback and Questions

- David Brown praised the effort, noting that his department created clear promotion guidelines collaboratively with contract faculty. He asked whether such

models exist across other departments or if his was unique. Dowd responded that it varies across the University, and that consistency is a goal.

- Mark Bee asked whether the subcommittee is coordinating with existing working groups tied to the University's workforce reinvestment resolution. **Dowd** confirmed that she and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Beth Lewis are collaborating closely to ensure alignment and are meeting with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to refine their recommendations.
- Bee cautioned Dowd that the administration previously cited policy barriers as justification for the ongoing use of non-faculty job codes for individuals doing faculty-equivalent work. He urged Dowd to report back on any administrative roadblocks framed as policy issues, arguing that policy should be changed, not used as an excuse.
- Goodnough suggested that the new HR system might reduce the incentives for maintaining chaotic employment structures, leading to a more receptive environment for reform. She observed decreased resistance from leadership during recent discussions.
- Jean Abraham highlighted large variations in teaching loads for full-time positions across units and supported standardizing workloads, especially for P&A instructors and teaching-focused faculty. Dowd agreed and pointed to the potential of a job family study to address this issue.
- Goodnough suggested identifying units (e.g., Pharmacy, Nursing, Vet Med) with effective models for managing instructional staff and using those as exemplars for others.
- Several participants emphasized the importance of educating both the BOR and administrators about the realities of faculty and instructional staff roles. Dowd mentioned that her committee has spent significant time on this outreach.
- Goodnough recounted that some instructional staff wrongly assumed faculty receive cost-of-living raises in addition to merit pay—highlighting the need for broader transparency and communication around compensation structures.
- Goodnough raised concerns that current BOR policy prevents granting emeritus status to P&A instructors. She suggested exploring whether an administrative

workaround or parallel policy could provide similar recognition and benefits without requiring a formal policy change from the Board.

- Rachna Shah asked about intermediate steps that could help advance toward the long-term goal of a better, more unified employment structure.
- Goodnough suggested making 7.12 statements (which define criteria for promotion and tenure) more accessible across units by listing them on the provost's webpage, alongside existing ones from units like Dentistry, Nursing, and Veterinary Medicine. She emphasized this as a simple but effective step toward transparency.
- Bee asked whether the Workforce Reinvestment Resolution and current mechanisms are enough, or if more senate resolutions are needed. Dowd indicated some motion is already happening—especially regarding a job family study—but she requested further guidance on process.
- Goodnough emphasized not duplicating efforts if some initiatives are already underway. Instead, the FCC should focus on areas facing more resistance, she said.
- Niloufar Hadidi highlighted that while it's helpful to follow existing 7.12 examples, significant internal work is still needed at the school level due to differences in context (e.g., School of Nursing's extensive work on a clinical faculty handbook).

The committee then discussed how to move forward recommendations from both TFAPS and the Academic Freedom and Tenure (AF&T) Task Force on Academic Freedom Protections for Non-Tenure Track Faculty. Van Wyk emphasized that the AF&T Task Force's recommendations focus on academic freedom, noting that it overlaps with TFAPS' work in areas like governance participation, but their overall scopes and approaches differ. Goodnough voiced strong concerns that the senate may not fully understand the AF&T Task Force report's implications—namely, that it recommends granting tenure to around 2,000 instructional staff. She noted this would require national searches, new tenure criteria, and departmental overhauls of 7.12 statements. She fears senators might vote without grasping these consequences. Van Wyk agreed that more senate discussion is necessary. He acknowledged the complexity of the

proposed changes and reiterated the importance of departmental autonomy in implementing any recommendations.

Returning to broader coordination, Goodnough and Dowd discussed the need for future meetings involving key senate and administrative leaders to review what's in progress, ensure alignment among various recommendations (including the AF&T Task Force and TFAPS), and chart a path forward—especially around more complex topics like contract faculty and Board policy constraints.

3. Committee Business

The committee then returned to discussion of the two sets of recommendations from TFAPS and the AF&T Task Force. Van Wyk explained that while there is overlap between the task forces—particularly around shared governance and academic freedom protections for term faculty and P&A instructional staff—the AF&T report is focused more on tenure as a mechanism for protecting academic freedom. He emphasized the need for an implementation task force to determine how to move forward, describing it as a long-term effort. Goodnough again expressed concern that many senators may not fully grasp the implications of the AF&T recommendations—namely, that implementing them could mean tenuring around 2,000 P&A instructors and contract faculty. She noted challenges around terminal degrees, national searches, and establishing teaching reputations, which would be required under current tenure-track norms. Perry Leo added that bringing the AF&T Task Force's recommendations to the senate for a vote may make the senate and/or University appear out of touch—suggesting it could be perceived as naive or extreme to promise tenure to 2,000 new people amid current budget and political climates. Van Wyk responded by saying that while timing and budget realities matter, the question remains how to begin reforming the system and providing real positions for long-serving, highly qualified P&A instructors. Jean Abraham underscored the importance of clarifying the core problems the University is trying to solve, especially amid immediate funding threats from federal changes. She warned against making large, binding commitments without clear financial sustainability. Goodnough proposed further discussion before the

April 24 Senate meeting, potentially including the topic on that meeting's agenda.

Next, the group briefly discussed faculty appointments to the selection committee for the Sexual Misconduct Hearing Committee.Goodnough noted that the work of the selection committee happens during the summer, which in the past has led to reluctance among 9-month contract faculty to participate. She suggested appointing faculty on 12-month contracts, especially from health sciences, where this structure is more common.

Goodnough adjourned the meeting, and she and other FCC members who are not on the Twin Cities FCC Nominating Subcommittee departed.

4. Nominating Subcommittee

Professor Rachna Shah, chair, convened the Twin Cities FCC Nominating Subcommittee, who discussed projected gaps in colleges represented on the FCC for academic year 2025-26 and plans for gathering nominations.

Amber Bathke

University Senate Office